

Remarks

The following is a response to the Office Action dated August 27, 2003.

In order to better define the instant invention, per the above amendment, claims 3 and 5-7 were canceled, claim 1 amended and new claims 8-10 added.

As presented in amended claim 1, the laryngeal mask assembly has extending along and outside of the assembly a groove that receives the inflation line, with the inflation line extending out of the groove to communicate with the sealing cuff on the mount.

By forming the tube and mount as a unitary molding step, it enables the groove to be provided along the external surface at the same time and enables the groove to extend to the best location for the inflation line to emerge and communicate with the sealing cuff with the minimum length of inflation line being exposed. By contrast, if the mount were formed separately, in the usual manner, and fitted over the end of the tube there would inevitably be a step over which the inflation line would have to be extended. This would be a disadvantage because of the risk of introducing a bent into the inflation line that may occlude it. If, instead, a groove or like would form in the mount as a separate component this would introduce difficulties in aligning the tube and mount.

The prior art Pagan U.S. patent 6,021,779 fails to teach the molding of the tube and mount together. And as far as is known to the applicant, no one has previously mounted the tube and the mount as a single component and has not, therefore, realized the advantages to be achieved by the simple manufacturing step of molding both the tube and a mount as an integral single piece component. By injection molding both the tube and mount together, the cost of manufacturing, as well as the time for manufacturing the assembly, are decreased, as the prior art method of manufacturing separate components and then assembling those separately components invariably takes a much more considerable amount of time. Moreover, in the prior process, the

parts are extruded. As a consequence, the tube would tend to have the same diameter thickness. On the other hand, for the instant invention molding process, different thicknesses may be formed along the assembly and a much better control of the flexibility along the length of the device is enabled, as the combination integral piece of tube and mount would simply be taken out or fall off, the mold, when completed. Furthermore, by molding the tube and the mount as a single unit, it is assured that no potential leakage would occur. Moreover, there are difficulties in molding relatively large products from relatively soft plastics especially where large variations in wall thicknesses are needed. Thus, it is far from obvious that it would be possible to mold the assembly of the instant invention.

As no one is believed to have injection molded the tube and mount of a laryngeal mask assembly of the instant invention, in order to further define the invention, per the above amendment, new method claims 8-10 have been added.

In light of the foregoing, applicant respectfully submits that the instant invention is patentable over the prior art. That being the case, the examiner is respectfully requested to enter this amendment, reconsider the application and pass the case to issue.

In the event the examiner has questions in regard to this response or has suggestions for expediting the prosecution of this case, he is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,



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